MEDIA MONITORS
INCISIVE INSIGHT

Perth Voice
07/04/2007
Page: 5
General News
Region: Perth Circulation: 35347
Type: Suburban
Size: 285.06 sq.cms
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Tackling the tangled web

THE age of appalling online spelling and writing could soon be over thanks to an East Perth computer boffin.

Wilson Wong, a PhD student at UWA, is in his second year of researching a superior online spell-checking software, and his results could see the major software producers sent to the back of the class.

Noisy texts

The Integrated Scoring for Spelling error correction, Abbreviation expansion and Case restoration (ISSAC), picks up dodgy spelling, abbreviations, missing case information and filling words such as 'um' and 'uh'.

"Writing that is full of these mistakes is called 'noisy' texts, and ISSAC is designed to effectively 'clean up' the texts," Mr Wong explained.

"Sites like blogs already have built in spell-checkers, but ISSAC is aimed at complementing the existing software to produce even better results."

UWA School of Computer Science and Software Engineering manager Jay Jay Jegatheva said that 'beta versions' of ISSAC have produced results with a 95 per cent success rate, beating the leading software creators by about 30 per cent.

Mr Wong has already presented his research at two international conferences.

"I've had encouraging responses, but one of the criticisms from people has been that the software will make internet users, and especially kids, more lazy because they will now never bother to use correct spelling when typing," he said.

However, Mr Wong reckons the results from his software will eventually convince people otherwise.

by CLARE DAVIDSON

William Wong's spell-checking program is showing promising signs.

Ref: 27336104

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